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case his wife needed him, although he invariably grumbled in his native Russian upon being called away from the game. A fourth hand during the summer was a reserve army officer whose intense love for German efficiency and ideology and whose contempt for the "ignorant, unreliable peasant" became bywords in the community. Peasants sitting on the porch of Bai Ivan's tavern on the eastern side of the square could observe with seeming indifference the intelligentsia at play, distracted though they were at times by the fervent temperance lectures delivered by the tavern keeper's daughter-in-law whenever she placed a glass of *rakiya* in front of a customer.

These intelligentsia proved to be interesting people. The mayor had a good education, completed by the study of law in Russia. His father had been a priest in Boyana, a village just four miles to the west, so the mayor, himself a *Shop,* knew the workings of the peasant mind. When he was sent to the village as mayor back in 1934, after the *coup d'état* of that year abolished all elections and deprived many local officials of their jobs, he issued a flowery proclamation which contained such thoughts as these:

> Therefore, as I take up my duties, desiring greatly to use the small abilities that I possess for the economic and cultural uplift of the villages included in the commune entrusted to my care, I wish to express my good feelings of loyalty and friendliness and attachment to the population and to certify that I am ready to work for the uplift of our commune and to be the loyal conveyor of its economic and cultural interests and needs.
>
> Imbued with the idea that we are all members of the same family, sons of mother Bulgaria, let us forget the recent past of shameful partisan struggles and begin to live as genuine brothers—Bulgarians filled with mutual love, patience, harmony, respect, and good will.
>
> Let us do our duty to these beautifully situated villages, perched on the slope of Mount Vitosha, and make them attractive gardens, with culture, and places of merriment and songs.

The people soon learned that the mayor when excited talked so rapidly that he failed to enunciate clearly, and they always enjoyed mimicking this mannerism. They did not particularly resent his management of their affairs, despite the fact that he had been sent by the central government which gave local communes no choice in

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the matter. The mayor was happily married to an attractive wife, who dressed *po modata* (in the latest fashion) and kept her children so neat and proper that they contrasted vividly with the peasant urchins who ran up and down the unpaved streets.

The mayor was charged with maintaining law and order with the help of the *strazhar* (police officer), the field policeman, and the forest policeman. The second wandered from field to field to see that cattle did not stray unattended onto strips where there were growing crops; the forest policeman prevented the purloining of wood from the forest lands used by Dragalevtsy people. The mayor also acted as local justice of the peace, and was ex officio member of the school board, health board, and any other village organization he considered worthy of serious attention.

But the mayor, although he enjoyed the spotlight, had to share it with the village priest. For five centuries, while the Bulgarians were subject to the Turks, the priest was often the only person in a village with any formal education. He not only interpreted the laws of God, but the laws of man as well. The Bulgarian monks and priests helped keep the feeling of Bulgarian nationality alive during those dark days, and thereby eventually aided in the achievement of national independence in 1878 at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War. Since traditions die slowly in a Bulgarian village, the position of the priest is still very high, although few people attend religious services and fewer people observe the rather rigid fasts of the Eastern Orthodox Church. However, the priest is an essential officiant at christenings, weddings, and funerals. Without him the peasants have no way of meeting life's major crises.

Father Sava was the *sveshtennik* or priest in Dragalevtsy. He wore with dignity his long black gown and high brimless hat, his uncut red hair in a knot at the back of his head, and a long auburn beard. I never failed to marvel at his wide range of interests. One day we would poke around his beehives; the next day he would show me his favorite photographs and competently discuss the relative merits of American and German cameras. But it was after I learned of the man's romance that I began to see him in a clearer light. The young lady whom he wanted to marry was the daughter of a priest

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642 666 vibrant youth and living hope, her fling at democracy failed, primarily because ballots were given to peasants who were not being taught the meaning of citizenship in a national state.

178 623 Those interested in democracy have much to learn from the story of government in Dragalevtsy. At the outset the informal rule of the elders, which had been recognized by the Turks, was replaced by a commune or *obshtina* with regularly elected officials. At first these units included a number of villages. By 1890 the increase in population necessitated the breaking up of the larger *obshtini* so as to include only two or three villages. In other words, the pendulum was swinging back in the direction of greater local control, the swing being further accentuated after the First World War.

665 Political parties grew like mushrooms in Bulgaria. In 1930 the country had more than sixteen significant parties; in the village of Dragalevtsy, with its total population of about sixteen hundred, there [557] were six important parties with recognized leaders and platforms. To be a party leader in the village meant added prestige; to be one in the city or on a national scale meant power. In order for a Dragalevtsy man to become a local party leader he had to be acquainted with important people in Sofia. Even though he had only one influential friend in the city, he could persuade this man to come out and help organize a party. Other peasants were invited to the organizational meeting and officers were elected. Naturally, the one who took the initiative would be chosen to an important post. Because of the multiplicity of parties and the intense strife among them, many people throughout the country breathed a sigh of relief when the authoritarian government, which came into power on May 19, 1934, abolished by decree all political parties and started the practice of appointing university graduates as mayors in villages. [622] This meant that the head of the government in a village was not dependent upon the will of the populace but had to produce results satisfactory to the officials over him. The breakdown of the party system was associated, especially as far as the conservative peasant population was concerned, not only with forces outside the village but also with the failure of popular education to develop into "a bulwark of people rule."

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Granting then that a personal sampling of public opinion, conversation with both Communists and Agrarians in the village, and the rough approximation of election returns all added up to a fair statement of the case, Dragalevtsy would definitely be labeled an opposition village. In fact, before I had even revisited the village a number of people in Sofia had told me that I would find this to be the case. Therefore, as I went around among the people and watched the government in action, I asked myself how it happened that a minority could so easily gain control of all effective governmental machinery. The chief secret lay, of course, in capturing the central government in Sofia, which since 1934 had more and more become a dominant influence in the country. But there were other methods adopted by the Communists which, when multiplied in the five thousand villages throughout the land, would explain to some degree why Communism's knock on the door might be said to have turned into a banging. Some of these techniques of political power were proving successful in Dragalevtsy, while others were not.

Effective party work in the villages would normally be guaranteed and to some extent guided by the organs of the state, such as the controlled militia (police) and the hand-picked mayors and secretaries of the communal councils. But even with this provision all was not smooth sailing in Dragalevtsy for the newcomers back in 1945. The difficulties over the mayor would be a case in point.

In September, 1944, the Central Ministry of Interior appointed a young Communist as mayor. Because local public opinion was either indifferent or unfriendly his work was relatively ineffectual. The following July the members of the Agrarian party, which at that time still participated in the Fatherland Front, held a meeting to protest against their present mayor. They went even further and elected a mayor of their own choosing, with the backing of the mayor of Sofia who was well disposed toward their cause. Although this election was not declared legal, the new mayor took over and began to function. His status remained unclarified because the Communists in the Ministry of Interior did not feel sure enough of themselves to force the issue at that time. By December, 1945, the situation had become further complicated since the incumbent mayor lacked the education necessary

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622 668 to qualify for governmental retirement benefits and his former supporters were now a part of the opposition. Sofia, too, had a new mayor. It seemed to the village dignitary that all of his trouble was becoming a labor of love for which he would receive little financial return. Upon last report he was seeking a way out of office and was subject to a great deal of jesting in the taverns. The men all laughed one day in December, 1945, when a visitor from Sofia addressed him as "Mr. Mayor," because nobody knew at that time whether he was the mayor or not.

An office more important, however, than that of the mayor was that of the Commune Secretary. In Dragalevtsy this man was a Communist and, although he did not take the public limelight as much as a regular mayor would, he was the key person in the local government. Communist party matters frequently cleared through him, and he was in position to inform higher authorities about all phases of village government. Whereas the mayor's allegiance was primarily to the people of Dragalevtsy and secondarily to the Agrarian party, a luncheon conversation with the Secretary showed me that his loyalty was first of all to his party. Through serving it he felt he was best serving the people.

668 575 883 178 Part of the secret of Communist control in the local community lay in the success which the Communists had in enlisting the aid of many of the young people. In a traditionalistic society, such as one finds in Dragalevtsy, young people have no place of importance. Prestige is reserved for the old; and wisdom is the prerogative of the aged. Therefore a young person is constantly being urged to conform; and whatever idealism may flare up within him in his late teens becomes dissipated in the face of his placid parents and the other apostles of the past. The Communists showed real insight, therefore, in their glorification of the young people, in giving them a place in the sun, as it were. One of the first things they did was to get control of the *Chitalishte,* or Reading-Room Association, and use that as the core for their young people's program. In the house just back of the *Obshtina* they set up clubrooms where members of the *RMS* (Workers Youth Union) could hold meetings, study up on party doctrines, or loaf. The members of this particular organization, although not

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on which they operate. Demonstrations then should be worked out not so much to illustrate the ideal but to show how present practices can be improved with the utensils already at hand. If this is done the village women no longer could say, "Oh, I can't do that, for I don't have all those things the stranger had."

4. *Local leadership would be recognized and used.* A great mistake, too often made, is the assumption that the mayor[1], an outside governmental appointee, is the leader of the village in all respects. Every activity has its own local leaders. By skillful questioning the outsider can learn which women are most respected in their particular neighborhoods. Each of these could be asked to call a *sedenka* together for her neighborhood at a time convenient both to the specialist and the women. Before they sponsored any such novelty the leaders must be convinced of the worthwhile nature of the activity; and can then be taught to assume an important part in the demonstration.

5. *The new proposals could be fitted more easily into the fabric of everyday life.* Not only must the women be given the techniques but they must be given an ideology to accompany those techniques. They must have an answer ready for the doubting husband, the curious neighbor, the pooh-poohing mother-in-law. They must see that what they are asked to do bolsters up rather than tears down those social values which they consider essential to their way of life.

To illustrate, we may return again to the matter of postnatal care. Expectant mothers in Dragalevtsy hesitate to prepare layettes for the infants in advance. They feel that such behavior, presuming as it does that the baby will survive, would anger the powers that be; women must expect the worst because the worst so frequently occurs. This is a fundamental fact to be reckoned with in the teaching of infant care. Most public health nurses recognize this difficulty, but many try to eradicate it by telling the women how superstitious and how silly they are. The more positive approach would recognize the limitations and try to do at least these two things:

a. Insist that clean cloths, soap, and all other available equipment needed at childbirth and in early infancy be prepared and set aside in advance. None of these cloths should require sewing, since all pregnant women are forbidden to sew.

b. Tell the mothers-to-be how they can make simple, hygienic garments as soon as they recover sufficiently from the delivery, for there is no *tabu* against such action then. Once they understand how to make and use such special garments in place of the unsanitary swaddling clothes, some of them

[1] The national government which came into power in May, 1934, sent engineers and lawyers and other educated people into key villages as mayors to supplant the local peasants, who had been elected by their fellow villagers.

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poorer peasant wanted to keep his children home from school he would have to face the withering scorn of his neighbors. I cannot help contrasting this situation with that found in the South where truancy is a major educational problem arising from the mobility of the population, the distance between home and school, and the low place afforded education in the scale of social values.

Most young Bulgarian men after their eighteenth year are called upon to serve their country as *trudovatsi* (members of the Labor Corps) or as soldiers. The time they spend in the barracks not only widens their social contacts and broadens their outlook but also educates them in the formal sense to the extent that they take advantage of courses offered. In America the Civilians' Conservation Corps is roughly analogous, differing in that it is on a voluntary basis, pays the youth for work done, and is restricted to those young men from families of a low economic level.

The Bulgarian peasant has a dualistic view of the universe. First, there are the forces of good which must be propiciated. The priest is God's intermediary and can intervene with him in the event of a drought, serious illness in the family, or sterility in the wife. The priest christens the baby and sanctifies the marriage tie. In the event of death he performs the liturgy to insure the soul's passage into a heaven thought of in very realistic but not enthusiastic terms.

There are also the forces of evil whom it pays well to placate. A few old women in every village are the "priestesses of superstition" whose incantations work wonders and drive off the Evil Eye. Peasants do not discuss this white magic when the priest is around, so complete is the dichotomy between the Good and the Bad. Religion as represented by the church consists of form and ceremony rather than a challenge to daily living. Furthermore, the Bulgarian peasant derives little emotional release from an "other worldly" rapture indulged in on Sundays. He is too secure, too stolid, too practical for that. On the contrary, the insecurity of the Southern white is attested to by the increasing numbers adhering to the excitable Pentecostal type of religious expression.[*]

We hear much in the South today about suffrage reforms, abolition of the poll tax, government paternalism, and the failure of democratic processes. Since the same problems are being faced in Bulgaria a comparison may prove helpful.

Fifty years ago the villages were governed by elders, the influential heads of the larger families. After Bulgaria's Liberation from Turkey in 1878 the

[*] John B. Holt, Religious Secession and Class in the Southeast. A paper read before the Section on Sociology of Religion, annual meeting of the American Sociological Society, 1939.

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right to vote was gradually extended to the village men before these men had had the advantages of an adequate school system. They like ignorant people the world around were more influenced by personalities than by principles, thus becoming an easy prey to politicians who played upon their emotions, catered to their prejudices, and took advantage of their credulity. But vote they must or be fined approximately five dollars for staying away from the polls.

With an electorate so inexperienced in the democratic tradition, great confusion arose. For instance, there were sixteen political parties in a nation of six million, making it impossible for any party to get a clear majority. The only way government could go on was by a bloc composed of several parties, but even this was inefficient. Therefore in 1934 Bulgaria had a New Deal, a *coup d' etat* headed by some military men who initiated numerous agrarian reforms. No longer did the peasants vote and thereby control government policies; instead they were told what to do. Gradually those who had engineered this *coup d' etat* were displaced from power by the King, a dictatorship was averted, and two years ago[a] a semblance of democracy was again restored when the vote was given back to peasant men and mothers. Instead of allowing party affiliations the government organized the electorate on the basis of occupation, following the corporation system in Italy where parliamentary members represent an economic rather than a geographical constituency.

Watching the failure of democracy in Bulgaria has made me gravely concerned about the future of democracy in the South. I am strongly in favor of giving our disenfranchised groups the right to vote, but so many advocates of suffrage reform seem to forget the necessity of training these groups in the meaning and proper use of the ballot. Democracy is not a quantitative process which is better guaranteed by increasing the number of voters; it is a qualitative process which requires increasing understanding of the obligations of citizenship as well as extension of the franchise. Ignorant voters pave the way for demagoguery[b]; demagoguery creates a situation ripe for the dictator; dictatorships doom democracies.

Since 1934 the Bulgarian political philosophers have been floundering between democratic and dictatorial procedures but the peasant has been handed over to a new type of paternalism which has its analogy in the South. The central government in Sofia is represented in the village by a professional man, usually a lawyer, as mayor. This mayor acts as local justice of the peace; he takes advantage of every public occasion to tell the peasants in a fatherly way what they ought to do and think about matters of national importance.

[a] Parliamentary elections were held on the four Sundays of March, 1938 (*The New International Year-Book, 1938, Bulgaria*).

[b] A. F. Raper, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-169.

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The mayor has some influence with the Debt Commissions coming from government banks to relieve the debt burdens of the farmers, he distributes whatever relief is available for needy families, and he has a prominent part in the administration of the school, public health, and village improvements. Because of this he is gradually displacing the priest as the most important personality in the village. In other words, the paternalism of the church is now being supplanted by that of the state.

We find a similar situation in the South where white farmers are beginning to depend less upon landlords, banks, and advancing merchants, and more upon the grants from governmental units, whether in the form of relief or credit facilities. Plantation or small-town paternalism is yielding to governmental paternalism.

The Bulgarian peasant is not a joiner. He does not use the organizational approach in attacking a problem but prefers to work through informal groups. There are two chief reasons why he avoids membership in the numerous formal groups seeking the villagers' support: first, he is penurious and will pay no membership fee unless he sees some prospect of personal advantage; secondly, he does not understand the purpose or program of the organizations, since most of them originate in the cities and are promoted by the *intelligentsia*. There are no church organizations claiming his support as in the case in most Southern neighborhoods. Living in a village as he does the peasant can visit with friends and neighbors without the necessity of having an organization to provide a rallying place.

The Southern white thinks vertically; the Bulgarian peasant horizontally —a difference in mental pattern which accounts for the difference in social process.

By "thinking vertically" I mean that traditionally the Southern white is dominated by the attraction of the American ladder of opportunity, although for him it has often proved mythical.[20] That is, success in life is determined by the extent to which one approximates the plane of living enjoyed by those of a higher economic level. Climbing means competition rather than co-operation.[21] Frustration seems to be displacing the traditional, optimistic view among many of the Southern whites. They look up the ladder, but say, "What's the use of starting the climb!" As individuals they are pitted against forces over which they have no control.[21]

[20] H. C. Nixon, *op. cit.*, p. 9. Shows the traditional nature of this mind-set in speaking of the Old South: "Nonslaveowners expected to become small slaveowners, and small slaveowners expected to become large ones." The mythical aspect is shown nowadays by the phrase "once a sharecropper, always a sharecropper."

[21] Odum, *op. cit.*, pp. 585-586, emphasizes the need for county and/or community co-operation.

[21] Perhaps Populism in the late 19th century came as near creating a consciousness of kind among the rural whites as anything else has ever done.